

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 469

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GR, US

SUBJECT: MISSION TO GREECE

REF: UNDER SECRETARY SISCO'S MESSAGE TO
AMBASSADOR (STATE 218750)

1. SUMMARY. ON BALANCE, I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO SEND A SPECIAL MISSION TO GREECE TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, BUT TIMING AND CONTENT WILL BE CRUCIAL. IDEALLY -- FROM A STANDPOINT OF OUR RELATIONS WITH GREECE ALONE -- THE SECRETARY COULD MAKE THE OFFER PERSONALLY WHEN HE SEES BITSIOS NEXT WEEK IN NEW YORK. THE ANNOUNCEMENT COULD BE MADE AT A MUTUALLY AGREEABLE TIME, PROBABLY SOON AFTER REPEAT AFTER THE CONGRESS ACTS ON THE TURKISH ARMS EMBARGO. ALTERNATIVELY, I COULD RAISE IT WITH BITSIOS HERE BEFORE HIS SEPTEMBER 21ST DEPARTURE FOR NEW YORK BUT THAT WOULD NOT HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF THE SECRETARY'S OBVIOUS PERSONAL INTEREST AND INVOLVEMENT. FURTHER DETAILS OF MY ANALYSIS AND VIEWS FOLLOW. END SUMMARY.

2. AS I SEE IT, THE ADVANTAGES IN SENDING A SPECIAL MISSION TO GREECE (ASSUMING IT HAS SOMETHING TO DISCUSS BESIDES WHAT HAS ALREADY APPEARED IN THE PRESS) WILL BE IN TERMS OF OUR DIRECT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT AND, TO SOME EXTENT, IN THE
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PUBLIC RELATIONS FIELD. FOR FACT-FINDING PURPOSES

I SHOULDN'T THINK WE WOULD NEED A MISSION. ALL RELEVANT DATA ARE ALREADY AVAILABLE IN WASHINGTON AND WE HAVE ALREADY HAD MANY FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS WITH TOP GREEK OFFICIALS ON THE SUBJECT, INCLUDING THE VISIT TO WASHINGTON OF FINANCE MINISTER DEVLETOGLOU AND BANK OF GREECE GOVERNOR ZOLOTAS JUST TEN DAYS AGO.

3. ON THE PUBLIC RELATIONS SIDE, SUCH A MISSION WOULD CUT BOTH WAYS -- GOOD AND BAD. THERE WILL BE NO WAY, FOR EXAMPLE, TO PREVENT SOME CRITICISM FROM BEING WIDELY EXPRESSED IN GREECE IF A PROMINENT MISSION COMES HERE -- WHETHER BEFORE OR AFTER CONGRESS ACTS ON THE TURKISH EMBARGO AND NO MATTER WHAT THAT ACT IS. THE CRITICISM WILL BE EXPRESSED AS OUR TRYING TO BUY GOODWILL AND COOPERATION IN GREECE AFTER OUR "PRO-TURK" STAND ALL THESE MONTHS. THE GOG WILL BE CALLED UPON BY THE ANTI-US AND ANTI-NATO PRESS -- AND BY PAPANDREOU AND OTHERS OF HIS ILK (PERHAPS EVEN MAVROS, ALTHOUGH I DOUBT IT) -- TO REJECT SUCH OFFERS OF HELP. "GREECE CANNOT BE BOUGHT" AND "GREEKS WILL NEVER SELL OUT THEIR CYPRIOT BRETHREN FOR AMERICAN DOLLARS," THEY WILL SAY; AND SUCH A LINE WILL HAVE WIDE APPEAL. NOTIONS OF HONOR, INDIGNATION AND OUTRAGE ARE EASILY AROUSED IN THIS COUNTRY -- AS IS WELL-KNOWN IN WASHINGTON -- AND COUNTRY-WIDE, ANTI-AMERICAN BITTERNESS REMAINS ONLY UNEASILY QUIESCENT.

4. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS LEDGER, THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, THE GENERALLY PRO-AMERICAN OLDER GENERATION, AND A BROAD SWATH (THOUGH BY NO MEANS ALL) OF THE MILITARY, WOULD WELCOME AND TO SOME EXTENT BE REASSURED BY SUCH A MISSION.

5. HOW WOULD THE GOG REACT IF AND WHEN WE PROPOSE IT? IN MY VIEW, CARAMANLIS WOULD CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING THREE MAIN FACTORS:

A) THE POLITICAL REACTION AND REPERCUSSIONS IN THE COUNTRY. ON THIS HE WOULD CONCLUDE
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IT WOULD BE A NET LOSS FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW. THE MISSION WOULD HELP HIM IN THOSE SECTORS WHERE HE NEEDS NO POLITICAL HELP AND HURT HIM IN THOSE SECTORS WHERE HE DOES.

B) GREECE'S NEED FOR OUR ASSISTANCE. ON THIS, HE WOULD CONCLUDE THAT A MISSION COULD ONLY BE HELPFUL (ALTHOUGH MY OWN OVERALL IMPRESSION IS THAT THE SHORT -- AS OPPOSED TO

MEDIUM -- TERM ECONOMIC SITUATION IS LESS
SERIOUS AND URGENT THAN WAS ANTICIPATED EARLIER
THIS YEAR).

C) GREECE'S BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE
U.S. SINCE A MISSION COULD BE EXPECTED TO
HELP STRENGTHEN BILATERAL TIES -- AND TO
REFUSE IT COULD DAMAGE THEM -- CARAMANLIS WOULD
VIEW THIS AS A REASON FOR ACCEPTING THE MISSION.

6. THUS, CARAMANLIS WOULD -- ON BALANCE --
PROBABLY DECIDE TO ACCEPT THE MISSION.

7. WOULD HE AND THE GOG VIEW IT AS A DEVICE TO
INFLUENCE CONGRESS ON THE TURKISH EMBARGO?
THAT WOULD DEPEND ON WHEN WE WANTED TO ANNOUNCE --
TO LEAK -- ITM IF WORD OF IT DID NOT GET OUT
UNTIL AFTER THE CONGRESS ACTED, I THINK THE GOG
WOULD TAKE IT AT FACE VALUE -- THAT WE GENUINELY
WANTED TO HELP CARAMANLIS AND HIS GOVERNMENT AND
BUILD AN IMPROVED SET OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH
GREECE. IF WE PRESSED TO GET THE WORD OUT BEFORE
CONGRESSIONAL ACTION, THEY WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY
CONCLUDE IT WAS BASICALLY INTENDED TO INFLUENCE
VOTES.

8. AS FOR THE PUBLIC AT LARGE, THERE WOULD BE A
MIXED REACTION -- AS INDICATED ABOVE -- NO MATTER
WHEN IT WAS ANNOUNCED, BUT IF IT WERE ANNOUNCED OR
LEAKED BEFORE CONGRESS ACTS WE SHOULD BRACE OURSELVES
FOR AN OVERWHELMINGLY CRITICAL OUTCRY.
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